

F

83

H66











**HINTS**

**TO THE**

218  
460

**FARMERS**

**OF**

**RHODE-ISLAND.**

**BY A FREEMAN.**

.....

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

OFFICE OF THE REPUBLICAN HERALD.

JOHN S. GREENE, PRINTER.

1829.

F83  
H66

## HINTS TO FARMERS.

### FELLOW CITIZENS.—

It is the bounden duty of every citizen of the Republic, to examine and enquire into its state and condition. No republic can be preserved in its purity except the individuals that compose it are vigilant and watchful upon the administration of its concerns. Rhode-Island was once prosperous and happy—her legislators were wise and prudent, and her finances were administered with economy. But that day has passed away. Poverty, distress and ruin, with a steady pace, are marching upon us. For the last six years, our State council, squaring their conduct by the rule of their aristocratic master, “the arm of the Representative has not been palsied by the will of the constituent;” and our resources have been scattered and wasted in delirious extravagance. But a few years ago, the annual expenses of this State did not exceed \$7,000, and now they have swelled to the startling amount of more than \$18,000, exclusive of the money devoted to the School fund. There are but two legitimate items that ought to be added to our former expenditures, viz. the compensation to Representatives and Jurors. The Senate were paid under the former appropriation. Then for one moment enquire and calculate, whether the pay of Representatives and Jurors does create the difference between the \$7,000 and the \$18,000. The house of Representatives consists of 72 members—65 are the average number that attend; and calculating that the Legislature sits 26 days, including going and returning, the pay of the Representatives will amount to \$2,535. Adding the former expenditure

Added	\$9,535
Our present expenditure	\$18,000
And deducting our former expenditure and Representatives pay	9,535

Excess \$8,465

Leaving an excess of \$8,465, to defray the pay of jurors. And none will believe that this large excess is required to pay the compensation allowed to them by the law.

These facts must satisfy every citizen that the Legislature of this State have wasted our resources with an unsparing hand: And the period has arrived for us to arouse and enquire, if a change is not absolutely necessary and expedient. And if it is, we ought to remove such unwatchful and unworthy servants, and substitute others fresh from the people, who knowing our grievances and feeling our wrongs, will be willing to redress them.

Let us enquire and investigate into the causes of this great increase in state expenditure. We will state a few of these appropriations, to show to what purposes our money has been diverted.—At June Session, 1823, the General Assembly passed the following vote—

“Voted, That the sum of two hundred Dollars be paid to Charles Gyles, from the General Treasury, for his services in copying two books of ancient records, agreeably to the resolutions of the General Assembly in January 1824, as soon as he shall deposit the said copies in the Secretary's Office.” This is highly extravagant for copying two books of common records, and no one has yet informed us of the necessity of procuring copies of them, and none occurs excepting to gratify the literary curiosity of the antiquarian. State purposes did not demand the appropriation, and the committee who were appointed, nor the resolutions upon which the vote was founded, have stated any case in which it was necessary that the records should be used.

At the January Session, 1828, “Voted and Resolved, That the sum of two hundred Dollars be paid out of the General Treasury to Henry Bowen, for his services in full for collecting and copying the ancient records of this State (then colony) from the year 1686 to 1715, and comparing the same.” Another expenditure equally as extravagant and useless.

And at June Session 1827, the following appropriation was made.

“Voted and Resolved, That the sum of FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS be appropriated and paid out of the Treasury, to the Rhode Island Historical Society, for the purpose of aiding and assisting that Society in carrying into effect the objects of the incorporation, viz. to collect and preserve whatever relates to the typography, antiquities, and natural, civil and ecclesiastical history of this State.”

At the January Session, 1827, it was “Voted and Resolved, That from and after the first Wednesday in *May last*, there be paid to the Secretary of State the sum of one hundred Dollars per annum in addition to his present salary, to be paid quarterly out of the General Treasury.” What should be the reason of this addition? The Secretary was already allowed \$650 per annum as a salary, besides his fees allowed by law, *vid. State Law*, page 103. sec. 4.—The Secretary's is a responsible but not an onerous duty, the duties of the office do not absorb the whole of his time; he practices law in addition to the duties of this office. Did this incumbent complain? Did he attempt to resign? No, it is one of the best offices in the State. Then why raise the salary? In this era of high salaries and profuse expenditure? It is pleasant to be donors at the public expense.

At the same session, the spirit of liberality was further extended. The new Supreme Court Act was passed, decreasing the number of Judges from five, at the yearly compensation of \$1050, to three, at the increased compensation of \$1740 annually, and since then



another act was passed giving this Court the entries of insolvent petitions in addition, which increases their pay to \$2000 per year. The Legislature in this measure not only innovated upon our ancient constitution, customs and county rights, but have given \$550 to each of the side Judges when the same men, viz. Brayton and Randall, were willing and desirous to serve at the annual salary of \$287 each, the former compensation. What solution can be given to this? What prudent man ever gave a laborer one dollar per day when half of that sum was only demanded? Legislators should conduct the affairs of the republic as a prudent man would conduct his own affairs. And it is asked if one of our common citizens should manage his concerns after this manner; as members of the Court of Probate should we not put him under guardians? Just as if the legal knowledge of the Judges would expand in proportion to the extravagance of their salaries. And the Senate who concurred in this measure again present themselves to us for renewal of favor.

But innovation under the color of improvement is not to rest here, the fiat from head quarters has already gone forth and your Courts of Common Pleas are to be intrenched upon as soon as circumstances will permit. The Manufacturers Journal, under date of January 8th last, whose editor assumes to control and mould our Senate to his liking, has issued the following decree, which the members of his own creation will not dare disobey.

"The question naturally occurs, if three judges with a salary, are better for the Supreme Judicial Court than five, why would not three be also better for the Courts of Common Pleas? The pay received by the five Judges of the Court of Common Pleas for this county, divided among three, would amount to something respectable, and induce those three to qualify themselves for the discharge of the important duties of a Judge. Three could certainly do the business of the Court without inconvenience. Many advantages would arise from the reduction of the number. There would be more despatch and certainty in the law, and the only possible evil would be the displacing of two supernumerary Judges. They would lose their appointments, but the public be the gainer. The example has been set in the Supreme Court; the experiment succeeded to a charm. Why not try it on the Common Pleas? The people are prepared for the change, and will sustain the Legislature if it attempts one."

The fees of the Judges in Providence County amount to about \$2000 a year, that would give three, the number contemplated, nearly \$700 a year each, and as the County Judges are to receive salaries under the new arrangement, (say \$500 per year each,) it would add a handsome item to our already overburdened treasury; and if the resources derived from taxes on Banks, now litigated, should fail us, a resort to direct taxation on lands must be

immediate, to an amount involving the landholders' ruin. This, in the language of the state manager, "would be succeeding to a charm, the public being a gainer; and the people," says he, "would sustain the Legislature should they attempt it." And the further improvement of increasing the term of service of the Judges to six years instead of the present annual election; and then for good behavior or life, which is in contemplation, and the present Senate are advocated as being friendly to the measure, the people will have rivetted upon them the most odious features of the late constitution engendered by a convention at Newport, and which once we have indignantly rejected.—The prox advocated by the Journal, American, and other presses confederated for its election, were the conspicuous advocates for the adoption of that constitution; and the majority of the members composing that prox, viz. the present Senate, Wheaton, Cooke, Watson, Thomas Whipple, Eldred, Cross, and Burton, zealously exerted their influence to effect it. And upon its success depends these contemplated changes in the organization of our ancient system of Courts and our fundamental laws of representation. Yes, the next step in progress is to remodel the representation in the General Assembly, and to district the State for Senators, and the constitution, which has been so triumphantly rejected, will be irrevocably fixed upon us. Thus accomplishing indirectly what you have directly voted down.

Within the last year, the Senate have been strangely inert and nerveless in holding the purse-strings of the State, and their laxity in moral courage threatens approaching beggary. The doors of the treasury are thrown open to projectors and favorites, and they have felt no diffidence in profiting by the indulgence. For example, at October Session last, the Assembly passed the following vote.

"Resolved that Benjamin Hazard, Henry Bull, and Joseph L. Tillinghast, be and they are appointed a committee to cause a tomb to be erected over the grave of Commodore Oliver H. Perry, and that said committee be authorised to draw on the General Treasury for the sum of two hundred Dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary to enable them to carry the resolution into effect."

It is admitted that this native son of Rhode Island covered the Union with the glory of his achievement, and shed an enviable brightness and lustre on our national character. Over his virtues, his character or his grave, God forbid, that any one should cast a shade. Yet it is not improper for us to inquire, that as he died in the national service, and the victory he won was a national victory, ought not the earth that covers him to have been ornamented by national munificence out of the national treasury. A single request from our Legislature to the General Government, or motion from one of our members in Congress, would have relieved our State Treasury from a burden, creditable to ourselves and honor-

able to our country. And divesting ourselves of a delicacy that may not rightfully belong to us, let us ask ourselves, if the remains of Commodore Perry are entitled to a mausoleum? Are not other venerated and distinguished characters of our State also entitled to a marble column, telling to posterity on what hill their ashes repose? We are bound to be just as well as generous. And what slab has been erected by State authority denoting the spot where repose the consecrated bones of Roger Williams, the founder of our State? State munificence has left uncovered the sacred remains of those devoted and conquering *forty*, who spilt their life blood in the great battle of the salvation of the whites against the tomahawk and scalping knife of the native Narragansetts. The graves of Hopkins, Whipple and Olney, and a host of other heroic and venerated names, remain still unhonored.—A precedent like the one mentioned once established, and the ice once broken, the Legislature with an ill grace, can resist future applications, for like purposes, on their pride and example.

At this same session the Legislature passed another vote, allowing Benjamin Hazard and Albert C. Greene \$100 each for their professional services in the actions of the Providence Banks against the State. Now what did these *Gentlemen Lawyers* do? Under the direction of the committee appointed by the General Assembly, they filed similar pleas in these cases; there were no speeches nor arguments. By consent, one of the cases was appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States, the others to abide the result of the decision of the one appealed. This was the nature and extent of the services rendered, and ten Dollars each would have been an ample reward. Yet the Senate were too timid to reject such an exorbitant allowance, nor dared to do justice to an impoverished people for fear of offending two Lawyers. Such a feeble body are not entitled to the ballots of freemen — And yet further — In the case that was appealed, they have voted Mr. Hazard \$500 more, in order that he might repair to Washington to superintend its mere continuance, when in all probability, it will not be tried in two or three years. Yes; the General Assembly have dispatched Mr. Hazard to Washington to argue a constitutional question, whether the Legislature have the constitutional power to tax the Banks, at \$500 expense at the outset. Corn 50 cents per bushel, cheese, beef and pork at 5 cents per pound, and send a Lawyer to Washington at \$500 expense, only to see that a suit at law is entered and continued!!! Farmers, ponder on these things, and fearlessly act for yourselves. A *deliberate* Senate, that will not better deliberate for your interest than this, ought to be indignantly ejected from their seats.

Another subject came before the Senate in October last, of more importance in its consequences, and involving in its results, the destiny of you all. State bankruptcy, individual distress and poverty depend upon the eventful issue, viz. the payment of the



**STATE DEBT**—Zachariah Allen, of Providence, introduced the following resolution :

"The Committee to whom was referred the subject of the State debt and the petition of Jonathan Bowen and others, respectfully report,

That there are Notes or Certificates of various sums due from the State of Rhode-Island to several individuals, which Certificates have been held by them for many years, without receiving any part of the interest or principle due on said Notes. It appears that on several occasions sums have been set apart and appropriated by the State for the purchase of said Notes, and that the average rate paid for the same was about 65 per cent. upon the original amount thereof, without interest.

From the acknowledged justice of these claims against the State, your Committee cannot hesitate in recommending that an appropriation be made for the payment of the interest which shall hereafter accrue thereon, (should it not be deemed expedient to make an immediate appropriation for the payment of the principal of said debt) as an act of public justice, and an example of good faith due from a State to its citizens. The Committee therefore respectfully submit the following resolution :

*Voted and Resolved*, That the General Treasurer receive and register all Notes and Certificates of the debt now due from the State of Rhode-Island, which shall be presented and proved before him previous to the first day of January 1830; and that new certificates of said debts, signed by the Treasurer of this State, be issued, bearing an interest of four per cent. per annum, payable at the office of the Treasurer of this State, on and after the first day of January in every year succeeding the first day of January 1830.

This act was remodelled and passed the House Nov. 21, 1828, as follows, and is now before the Senate.

*Be it enacted by the General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is enacted*, That the General Treasurer of this State be authorized, directed and empowered to pay out of any monies in the Treasury, on and after the first day of January, 1829, one years interest, at the rate of four per cent. per annum, upon the amount of the face of the Notes or Certificates due from this State, to all such holders thereof as shall then and thereafter surrender up said Notes or Certificates, and receive in lieu thereof new Notes for the amount of the face of the Notes or Certificates so surrendered up, dated on the first day of January, as aforesaid, to be signed, registered and issued by the Treasurer of this State, and bearing an interest, at the rate of four per cent. per annum, payable at the office of the said Treasurer, on and after the first day of January in each and every year succeeding the first day of January aforesaid.

*And be it further enacted*, That for the due and full performance of this act the faith of the State is hereby pledged."



The young members not understanding the circumstances out of which this pretended debt arose, the resolution without much deliberation passed the House. It was sent to the Senate--an influential member prevented the ready assent of that body, and procured a postponement. The Senate had time during the recess to investigate into the history of this debt, and at their January Session last, instead of rejecting the act *in toto*, have further postponed it, with an intention, it is feared, of concurring in the measure after their re election. Fellow Citizens, let us enquire into the history of the pretended STATE DEBT, as few of you are old enough to recollect the time and circumstances out of which it grew. In the Revolutionary war the confederated Congress passed an act, that for all the expenses that should accrue, and for all supplies that should be furnished, and for all damages sustained in defence against the common enemy, the same should be paid for by the U. States, to be liquidated by the States. At the close of the revolutionary war, the General Assembly, in conformity to the act of the confederate Congress, issued notice to all those who had claims against the U. States, for supplies furnished, services rendered, or had sustained damages in the course of that eventful struggle, to bring them in and have them adjusted, that they might be presented in a form the most imposing against the U. S. for assumption. And agreeably to this notice their claims were presented to the Legislature of this State, and were liquidated accordingly. And as notes were considered the most direct and palpable shape in which the debts due to the people of this State could be presented and enforced against the U. S. and the best evidence of the amount of the debts, State notes were issued to the ascertained amount of these claims, it being the understanding, meaning and intention of all parties, at the time, that these notes were only evidences of the individual debts against the U. S. as ascertained by the Legislature. And as most of the members of the Assembly, and perhaps all, and a great majority of the people were creditors, (Rhode-Island suffering from the war in far greater proportion than any State in the Union) it was popular to make liberal allowances to the claimants. And there being no adverse party to investigate into, or object to these claims, Notes to an immense amount were issued as the ascertained amount of these claims, all parties understanding that these notes were only used as the best mode that could be devised to shape these demands against the U. States. The claimants would not at that time have waived their rights against the U. S. and have accepted of State obligations in lieu of them; the State at that time being insolvent and wholly unable to pay the bills of credit that had been issued; and such was the distress and embarrassments of the people when peace commenced, that the stock of the common farmers were sold at the public posts for the payment of their ordinary taxes. And this reason is sufficient to demonstrate that no Legislature would be mad enough to have at-

tempted to fund a debt against the people which all the property of the State at no period would have been sufficient to have discharged. And the holders would have been equally as desirous to have endeavored to obtain a security so invalid. And as conclusive evidence, demonstrating the intention of both parties, upon the adoption of the constitution, this debt was presented against the U. S. and they did assume and fund \$200,000; and the residue rejected. the claims upon investigations, proving to be unjust and irregular. And the notes now out, standing against this State, called the STATE DEBT, are the notes founded on the claims that were afterwards rejected by Congress as invalid and unjust. After their rejection by Congress, and the State not being liable for the payment, having only lent the claimants their name and aid in the shape of State assumption, the better to enable the holders to procure their payment by the U. S. they fell into immediate disrepute and were considered of no value. Speculators since that period have bought up these notes at administrator's sales and otherwise, for little or nothing (and the family of the mover of this resolution is reported to be largely interested in its adoption,) in expectation that some period might arrive when the history and circumstances of these notes might be forgotten, or through some false principle of honor or inattention, the Legislature might be induced to fund, or order their payment. The young gentlemen in the Assembly have given frequent evidences of *maiden* greatness by *maiden* speeches upon the honor of paying our State debt; honestly, though ignorantly supposing, that it was a just debt, because the speculators called it the STATE DEBT, and the printers called it the STATE DEBT. And but few are now living who were at its birth and its burial, and fewer who have taken the trouble to be informed on a subject so important.

The resolution is to fund a certain amount of this debt and pay the interest annually, while most of the members are ignorant of its amount. In the year 1819 the principal, exclusive of interest, was \$ 68,313,88, as near as could be ascertained. This sum, and the compound interest from the close of the Revolutionary war, (and if the principal is due, compound interest is as equitably due as the principal,) will amount to near or quite HALF a MILLION of DOLLARS. Then the question is put to you, will you saddle upon your own backs, and leave a mortgage upon the inheritance of your children and descendants, to the amount of HALF a MILLION of DOLLARS beyond your and their ability to redeem; to pay a debt to unprincipled speculators that we nor our fathers ever owed. Remember your fathers have suffered and shed their best blood to free us from foreign bondage, and shall we permit ourselves and our children to be held in vassalage and imprisonment by domestic speculators? Our ancestors used their swords, and it is for us to determine at the Polls whether we will longer support those, that are willing to make us slaves to aristocrats and speculators.

A Bill was introduced into the House of Representatives some sessions since, to repeal the 27th section in the Digest of this State, page 318, in these words .

“ And be it further enacted, That all estates, real or personal, granted or appropriated to religious purposes or to the use of schools or seminaries of learning within this State, be and the same are hereby exempted from taxation.”

The House at their October Session last, passed the act of repeal by a considerable majority. The Senate refused to concur, and postponed it to the session succeeding their re-election. In this measure the House spoke the voice of an almost unanimous people, but the Senate under the influence of the Providence aristocracy, sitting like an incubus, threatening death to our liberties, postponed the bill, on motion of Senator Smith, of North Kingstown, upon the colorable suggestion, that *there was too much excitement*. What ? because an injured people are restive under oppression, assigned as a reason why the burden should be longer borne ? A Mahomedan Pacha would have given a better one. Was, and is it not reasonable and just, that taxation should bear as equally as possible upon all classes of the community ? Should rich and wealthy corporations and institutions, or any particular denomination of Christians, have their property exempted from taxation, and the public burdens, and the taxation from which they are exempted, borne by the other classes, of diminished ability to sustain them ? Is the doctrine of Priestcraft to overspread the land of Roger Williams ? Facts speak in language not to be misunderstood. The committee appointed by the General Assembly to investigate into this subject reported, that in one town only in this State more than a million of property is exempted by the operation of the 27th section from taxation. Providence, Newport, Bristol, Middletown, South and North Kingstown, feel with severity the operations of this act, and large estates are held in several towns by literary and religious institutions, situated without the State—leases for 999 years, equal to all intents and purposes to a deed, have been taken of some of these farms and the purchasers now hold them exempted from taxation. And yet other citizens of the same towns, less wealthy than these lessees, have to pay the taxes which ought to be assessed on them. For instance in South Kingstown, is there any reason, that the other freeholders should pay the taxes on the lands holden by Rowland Hazard and Elisha Watson (our Senator,) two of the most wealthy men in that town ? Answer for yourselves. The small freeholders in the town of Providence are oppressed with taxes, while an immense amount of property, viz. a million, is exempted by the act, and consequently more oppressive on the other estates in it. This remnant of monkish superstition and regal prerogative now stands on our statute book, the shame and disgrace of the age in which we live. And yet our Senate are too weak and pusillanimous to concur in a measure to relieve us from an oppression so gross and unjust.



The plain matter of fact is, that the Lord Autocrats of the State have *wrecked* and *disordered* our Senate out of their independence, or they have forgotten or neglected the great interests of the people.

It behooves us to be awake and actively alive, when we see the interest of the landholder and tenant as seriously attacked and jeopardized as contemplated by the act which has already passed its second reading in the House and is now postponed to the next session—viz.:

*An Act providing for the use of Broad Rimmed Wheels.*

*Sec. 1.* Be it enacted by the General Assembly and by the authority thereof it is enacted, That from and after two years from the passage of this act, the wheels of every waggon, carriage or vehicle, built or rimmed anew, and drawn by three beasts, (excepting pleasure carriages,) passing upon or over any common highway or turnpike within this State, shall have fellows not less than four inches in width, and if drawn by more than two beasts, the said waggon or other vehicle (excepting as aforesaid) shall have fellows not less than five inches in width. *Provided*, That the wheels of stage coaches passing as aforesaid may have fellows only four inches in width.

*Sec. 2.* Be it further enacted, That the owner or owners, and also the driver of every waggon, carriage, or other vehicle, having wheels contrary to the provisions of this act, who shall drive or suffer the same to be driven, upon or over any common highway, or turnpike within this State, shall forfeit and pay for each offence a sum not less than five dollars nor more than twenty dollars, to the use of the Town, District, or Turnpike Corporation, liable by law to support the highway or turnpike upon which the offence shall have been committed, to be recovered before any Justice of the Peace within and for the County within which the offence shall have been committed, not being a member of the Turnpike Corporation or an inhabitant of the town or district liable for the support of the common highway or turnpike as aforesaid—*Provided however*, that no prosecution shall be sustained under the provisions of this act, which shall not be commenced within ninety days from the commission of the offence, upon the complaint of one of the Surveyors of highways, or of the Treasurer of the Turnpike Corporation within the Town or District liable for the support of the road upon which the offence shall have been committed, to a Justice of the Peace having cognizance of such offence. *And provided further*, that the provisions of this act shall not extend or be applied to any carriages passing upon or over any of the roads aforesaid, solely for the purposes of common husbandry.

*Sec. 3.* Be it further enacted, That this act shall be published in the months of January and June in each year for the term of two years in all the newspapers printed in this State, in which the laws of the State are published, and shall also be read at the annual town meetings for the same term of years.



This act some of the members of the Senate openly avow a determination to support, and yet no one measure of its magnitude would be so oppressive and vexatious to the landed interest, and particularly so to the tenantry of the State. Carts, which cost from 50 to 70 Dollars each, must be thrown into disuse, or if the use is attempted, it would be at the expense of prosecution, and a new one obtained at an increased expense in *tire* under additional duty upon iron, which at the present agricultural crisis would be cruelly unjust, and to the tenant an onerous item in addition to his rent. This bill, with other measures, exhibit a curious phenomena; that while other interests are enjoying protection from high duties through legislative enactment, the agricultural, distressed as it is, should be selected for burdensome exaction; regarded like the animal composing the stock of their farms, which will quietly lie down to be shorn without complaint. With all these evidences staring us in the face, can the farmers give this Senate their support? If from among us they are against us, our duty is imperative to discard them and select others, who knowing our interests will respect them. And reject without hesitation a bill introduced at the instance of Turnpike proprietors to increase their per centum upon roads exclusively and arbitrarily their own.

There is in *embrio* another subject which threatens the treasury with a serious encroachment. Messrs. J. L. Tillinghast, Dixon, and Haile, were a committee to report upon the expediency of educating the *Deaf and Dumb*, at the Hartford Asylum; the report was made to the last session of the Assembly and the measure recommended, and the expenses which other States paid were stated at \$115 for each person yearly, and that there were 45 of that unfortunate class in the State, and that four years were necessary to complete the education of each pupil, amounting to \$5,175 expense yearly, and \$20,700 for the whole four years. However philanthropic and benevolent all this may be, the cost ought to be counted and our ability ascertained whether we could bear such an immense burden, before we enter into a contract from which we cannot retreat without dishonor. This humane and benevolent act in other States has been performed by charitable societies and religiously disposed institutions, and the expenses paid by contributions from the humane and wealthy. So it would be and has been done by similar societies in this State, but the Lawyer triumvirate of Tillinghast, Dixon, and H. Y. Cranston, dictators of the majority in the Assembly, seem disposed to exhaust our treasury with innumerable splendid projects at the expense of others. Can and will the people consent to enter into a contract like the one proposed, upon the recommendation of men who pay no taxes themselves and are reckless of the burdens imposed upon others? These projectors have been fertile in expedients to draw out of the treasury the people's money, but have not devised or pursued any digested plan to replace it. It is high time we arose and put into shade this Junta of Lawyers, wrought into notice by paid puffs in newspaper paragraphs.

A subject came up the last session of the Assembly, illustrative of the course of this Junta of Lawyers, and of the prodigality of the present administration of our State government. It was the repeal of the *Fawcattuck river fish act*. John Whipple, (a lawyer who never labors under price,) Thomas Whipple and David Wilkin-son, were appointed a committee to confer with a committee from Connecticut, on the subject of the fisheries in this river. It being a subject of private interest with certain landed proprietors about mill and factory dams and water privileges, the parties interested in the increase of the value of their private property offered to pay the expense of the committee, but Messrs. Tillinghast, Z. Allen and Dixon, (the latter sent by Westerly, but acts as a fifth representation for Providence,) advocated warmly, that the committee should be paid by the State instead of the parties, although the parties applying were willing to bear the expenditure ; thus attempting to cast on the people from three to five hundred dollars expense to compensate a committee appointed for a private purpose, when the applicants were ready and willing to defray it.

Our alarm ought to be excited at a proposition in agitation which will complete if effected, the prostration of the landed interest, and strip us of all the rights and privileges attached to and protective of property. Many in this State are clamorous for FREE SUFFRAGE, and meetings in Providence and other places have been called, of *non freeholders*, to petition the General Assembly to extend to every male over 21 years of age the elective franchise, and aided by presses established for the purpose, are vociferous on the subject. And at the late meeting in Pawtucket, of which Barney Merry (a great manufacturer) was chairman, it was vauntingly stated, that there are at least TWELVE THOUSAND free white male inhabitants in this State over 21 years of age," who are to be embraced in this extension ; which is double the number of the present qualified freemen. And upon the adoption of this favorite proposition, the landed interest would be liable to be voted down, by a professed majority of *two to one*, by those who would not be assessed one cent in the taxes and subjected to the burdens they might judge proper to impose. And it is worse than senseless to suppose that any restriction would add to our safety, for such a majority as this measure would create, would disregard, or cause the representatives, by whose vote they would be elected, to repeal them. The Farmers are reluctant to believe that this intended improvement is the boasted "American System" and protection of "Domestic Manufactures" which was to be encouraged. It is the "warmed adder," whose poison would work their death.

A measure of this character would give the rich power in proportion to their wealth, and the great manufacturers, bankers, merchants and large capitalists, with the means that are in their hands, would control the destinies of the State at pleasure. The property to be taxed, and the mode of taxation, would be directed by a class of citizens, who would bear none of its burdens ; and

we should be at no loss to conjecture, that the whole of our internal revenue system would undergo an immediate repeal, and the State burthens be thrown on real estate. In a short period corruption would be reduced to a system, and arrangements organized effectually to transfer the powers of election from the landed interest, to which it is rightfully attached, into the hands of a few. The great manufactories, the Banks and wealthy merchants might each send from 100 to 300 voters to the polls. And it is greatly to be regretted that the era of fraudulent *life deed voting* is again attempted to be revived in a more objectional shape. Every one must see the results. And from the consequences to be produced, it is to be hoped that not a single landholder who values his rights, will stand an idle spectator or be absent from the polls when this unblushing attempt is made by insolvent politicians to improve their fortunes at the expense of the dearest privileges of the soil. And it was to be hoped, for the honor of our State, that none could have been found bold enough to have avowed an open determination to put down the landed interest at a blow, which universal suffrage would most assuredly and effectually do. And it can scarcely be credited, that the sober steady and reflecting portion of the community, who value the stability of our institutions, and the glory of the republic, would entrust their own and the destiny of their descendants, in the hands of a population so transient and wavering; when all can obtain the necessary qualifications to legitimately act with us, if they had the disposition to make the investment. And it is an indispensable requisite that those who have the power to create burthens, should be liable to bear a due proportion of them when imposed. Justice, equity, and the inherent principles, upon which our institutions are founded, require it, and only the foes to good government would dissent from a doctrine so fundamentally necessary and reasonable.

To the intent that the previous abuses upon our rights should be corrected, and our State be preserved inviolate from waste and further encroachment, a convention which assembled in Providence on the 15th January last, composed of delegated freemen, firm in purpose and devoted to your rights, and the welfare of the State, formed and have submitted to you the following prox of General Officers for approval on the 3d Wednesday of April next.

FOR GOVERNOR  
**JAMES FENNER,**  
 OF PROVIDENCE.  
 LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR  
**CHARLES COLLINS,**  
 OF NEWPORT.

SENATORS.  
 1 NATHAN BROWN, of Johnston.  
 2 JOHN D'WOLF, of Bristol.



- 3 NOEL FREEBORN, of N. Kingstown.
- 4 ISAAC BARKER, of Middletown.
- 5 WILLIAM WHIPPLE of Cumberland.
- 6 JER'N. N. POTTER, of S. Kingstown.
- 7 GEORGE HAWKINS, of Coventry.
- 8 TH'S. REMINGTON, [s. n.] Warwick.
- 9 EDWARD BARBER, of Hopkinton.
- 10 GEORGE FIELD, of Cranston.

SECRETARY

HENRY BOWEN.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

ALBERT C. GREENE.

GENERAL TREASURER

THOMAS C. PITMAN.

Voted and resolved unanimously, that the members of this Convention will use all fair and honorable means to promote the election of the gentlemen by them nominated as General Officers for the ensuing political year.

*Resolved*, That the proceedings of this Convention together with an Address to our Fellow-Citizens, be signed by the Chairman and Secretaries, and published in the Republican Herald and the Providence Patriot.

JOHN R. WATERMAN, *Chairman*,

WILLIAM G. BOWEN, }  
JOSEPH H. PATTEN, } *Secretaries.*

Let us examine the characters and principles of the men composing this prox, and then the one adversary to it, and judge for ourselves. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and first Senator, are the same in both.

2d Senator. John D'Wolfe. For many years a Judge of the Supreme Court of this State, and a Senator in the General Assembly; a man of firm and established character, and a large farmer; and valuable as a member of the Senate, when the affairs of the State were conducted as ably as at present, and at one third of the expense that they are now.

3d Sen. Noel Freeborn. A man of considerable estate, and an industrious worthy citizen, an uniform republican, and a firm friend to the landed interest, whose character for integrity and independence, has entitled him to the esteem and confidence of the freemen of the town in which he lives.

4th Sen. Isaac Barker. For many years a Senator and also a Representative in the General Assembly, whose unbending integrity and devoted attachment to the landed interest were never questioned.

5th Sen. William Whipple. Well known to you all as an old friend of sterling merit, and an independent and firm supporter of the internal revenue system, and who was last year



sustained by the people against the attacks and machinations of its adversaries.

6th Senator. Jeremiah N. Potter (the nephew of the late Governor Samuel J. Potter, the long tried and faithful friend of Rhode-Island, and the valued companion in office of our lamented Chief Magistrate, the late Arthur Fenner,) is a plain and prudent farmer, of undoubted ability, and unostentatious integrity, and a decided Republican of the Jefferson school.

7th Sen. George Hawkins.

8th Sen. Thomas Remington, B. S. } Are likewise substantial farmers, who for many years have been, and Mr. Hawkins now is, a member of the House of Representatives; influential men, and justly enjoying the confidence of the Towns and County in which they live.

9th Sen. Edward Barber. Also a prudent, plain and thriving farmer, possessing a character of proverbial honesty, unshaken integrity, and kind manners; economical and exemplary in his habits, and a firm friend to the interests of the State.

10th Sen. George Field. Also a farmer, and for many years your Senator, who last year lost his election through the intrigue and management of a combination, for effecting the repeal of the internal revenue. If Rhode Island has a friend devoted to her best interests, and the people a sentinel to protect her rights from dishonorable encroachment, and the treasury from the hungry hands of projectors, it is George Field.

These candidates are all pledged to support the internal revenue and a judicious system of retrenchment and reform, and it is necessary for our individual welfare, and the public prosperity, that a salutary reform and retrenchment should be immediately resorted to, and that the State administration should be arrested in their career of innovation and extravagance, or like our sister Massachusetts, "the granite State," we shall be necessitated to hire money to pay our representative roll.—The Secretary, Attorney General and General Treasurer having no vote, and the Convention meaning to demonstrate to the people, that the interests of the State and our welfare, and not party principle or opposition, were their motives, have left them unopposed.

You will all recollect that an attempt was made last year, and a semi-successful one, by a combination of Bank holders, Auctioneers and Lottery venders, to work the repeal of the internal revenue system of this State by *packing* upon you a prox of Senators pledged to the purpose. Your vigilance detected and defeated the *scheme*, and our farmers and property saved from an annual burden of \$18,000 per year, to be wrung from us by the force of tax gatherers and tax warrants. This year the same *game* is to be played over again, and nothing but the political defeat and prostration of this subtle combination, and their unprincipled coadjutors, can secure our safety. And the question is put to us, whether the Banks, which are receiving from six to 10 per cent interest upon their capitals, with their exclusive privileges of bank attachments,

over ordinary process; and whether the venders, Auctioneers and Brokers, are to pay taxes for their exclusive privileges? or whether the taxes, instead of being as they have been, are to be borne by the farmers, who are not receiving three per cent. upon their estates, with no exclusive privileges, but those "of hewers of wood or drawers of water," to the monied aristocracy.

The candidates in the other prox are guilty of contributing to the waste and expenditure of the past four years and of increasing the State expenditures \$10,000 more yearly than economy and common prudence required, or our exigencies demanded. And from the influence that the exclusive monopolists and bank aristocracy exercise over them, impresses us with fears alarming to our interest. And the evidence upon which they rest are not of a nature to quiet our apprehensions. Nathan M. Wheaton, Elisha Watson, Thomas Whipple, Charles Eldred, George D. Cross and George Benton, are directors or bank holders, two of them, Watson and Eldred are Presidents of Banks, and have large interests in them. Wheaton, Cooke, Whipple, Eldred and Cross are small land holders. Here then a majority of the Senate are Presidents, Directors, or Stockholders in banks, and far the more. Wheaton is a merchant, Cooke, Watson and Whipple are shopkeepers, (Watson is also a large land holder, but his interest from banks and his other personal property, far exceeds that from his lands) Eldred, a physician, and Cross a tanner and currier, and none cultivators of our soil. By them Brown and Whipple are overruled.

Farmers look at this BANK PROX, their interests are adverse to yours, and it is never safe to trust those to act for us when it is their interest not to do so—they would rather deceive than injure themselves. The combination influence created, and supports this prox, and they will be obedient to the will of their creators. If this prox is elected, the bank taxes, and the internal revenue duties, will be repealed and the State burthens thrown on us, greater than our ability can sustain. FREEMEN, arise, assume the armor of independence—Let us gird on our strength and say, we will be free, and that unprincipled speculators shall not impose on us and our children a debt of HALF A MILLION that we nor our fathers ever owed; that Bank holders, Lottery venders and brokers shall not throw upon us all the State burthens, nor longer govern the land holders, nor impose a prox upon us made by their intrigues or subject to their influence. Say to those in power, that they have betrayed their trusts and have wasted in extravagant salaries and exorbitant expenses, more than half our State resources—that they continue upon us that unjust and oppressive law, exempting more than a MILLION of property from taxation, to favor priestcraft and monopoly, thereby increasing the burthens of taxation heavier upon us—Say to them they are unworthy servants and unfaithful centinels, they are exempted from further service and our confidence—Yes, Freemen, be fearless, and repair to the polls one and all, and give your votes to the FARMERS' PROX.









LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 111 314 8

